



December 18, 2013

To: Governing Board

Subject: **Class Pass and Student Rider Program Overview**

Recommendation

Receive and file an update on Foothill Transit's Class Pass Program.

Analysis

Foothill Transit currently has student ridership programs at Rio Hondo College (GoRIO) and Pasadena City College (I-Pass), both subsidized by the colleges, and an additional two pilot Class Pass programs at Mt SAC and the University of La Verne. Student ridership programs across the country account for 11 percent of public transportation users, helping local colleges reduce campus congestion and university parking costs while improving regional safety and air quality around commuter campuses. Reaching out to students increases the probability of their ridership as they enter the workforce, generating transit-positive commuters of the future. These programs are used as marketing and ridership growth efforts that allow transit agencies the opportunity to collect valuable information on systemwide ridership.

Foothill Transit's participation in GoRio and IPASS is part of a regional program where multiple transit agencies participate. For these programs, Metro provides the administrative support for the program including marketing and program materials.

Foothill Transit began the Class Pass pilot this year at Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) and the University of La Verne. Foothill Transit is the lead agency in the Class Pass and provides marketing and program support to each campus.

History – The GoRIO pilot began in the Fall Semester of 2006 and was the first program of its kind for Foothill Transit. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the pilot program was for a two semester pilot program where Foothill Transit would accept \$4,779 per semester from Rio Hondo to cover the estimated revenue derived from passes that were sold to full-time students. The funding for the pilot came from Measure A bond funds that were dedicated to reduce demand for parking and ease traffic from construction.

After the pilot program, Rio Hondo students voted on a transportation fee that each student pays - currently \$7. The current GoRIO MOU stipulates that the college subsidize student ridership on Foothill Transit's service at the rate of \$17,500 for the 2012 - 2013 academic year (two semesters). That subsidy rate is up from \$10,000 in the previous year and is based on ridership data available from Foothill Transit's fare



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collection system. GoRIO ridership numbers are estimated at approximately 30,000 boardings per year.

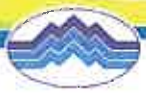
The I-Pass pilot began in Fall of 2010. The MOU for this program covered the first semester where Foothill Transit would accept \$30,000 for full-time students to have access to Foothill Transit services. It is our understanding that this pilot was funded through the college's General Fund.

The current I-Pass MOU stipulates that the college subsidize student ridership on Foothill Transit's service at the rate of \$60,000 for the 2012 - 2013 academic year. PCC students who want to participate in the program pay \$30 per semester to the college. PCC ridership is estimated at approximately 65,000 per year.

Class Pass Pilot – Early in 2013 the Executive Board approved Class Pass pilot programs at Mt. SAC and the University of La Verne that launched in the Fall semester of 2013. The Class Pass provides students with Foothill Transit services at no cost to the school for three semesters. This gives students an opportunity to experience Foothill Transit and provides a cost-free opportunity to find out how the system can work for them. By allowing students to ride throughout our service area we create riders that use the system not only for school, but to travel to work and social outings. The pilot will allow Foothill Transit to gather accurate ridership data to project the cost to the college to continue the program beyond the pilot phase. During the third semester of the pilot, Foothill Transit representatives will discuss the projected cost of the program with each college's administrators. The final decision on the continuation of the program at each college will lie in the hands of the college administration and/or the students by way of a vote.

The Class Pass pilot program proposal is different from the GoRio and IPASS. The most notable differences are: (1) both full and part-time credit students can participate in the Class Pass program and have access to Foothill Transit's service; (2) the Class Pass pilot is a three semester program used to calculate an appropriate subsidy amount and during the final semester the students will vote on the program; and (3) students can ride Foothill Transit local and Silver Streak services.

Each Class Pass pilot program was designed with different benefits, planning strategies, and timelines based on the needs of each college's campus population as determined by conversations with representatives of the administration of both institutions. While the overall goals of the Class Pass Program are the same for each college, variations between each college's registration processes, program details, and student population necessitated slightly different approaches to each pilot program.



Technology Development for Class Pass - The development of a tracking system for the Transit Access Pass (TAP) cards was the first item to be addressed with each school. In order to reduce fraud, a system of tracking was created for each school. Foothill Transit administrative staff coordinated with each college to create a tracking program linking the student ID to the TAP card's serial number. By linking the student ID with the TAP card number that is issued, changes can be made remotely to the TAP card and the fare on that card. For example, when a student withdraws from all their classes they become ineligible for the program and the fare media is automatically removed from the TAP card.

Class Pass Ridership - The University of La Verne Class Pass soft launch began on August 26 during the first week of school. It is not expected that the University of La Verne program will affect volume on our lines like Mt. SAC has because of the size of the school and the routes that serve campus. In comparison, Mt. SAC's student population is 30,000 while the University of La Verne's student population is 6,000. In addition, Lines 289 and 486 serve Mt. SAC directly, while Line 492 serves the northern perimeter of University of La Verne and Line 197 serves one stop adjacent to campus.

The Mt. SAC Class Pass has been a runaway success. Over 5,750 TAP cards have been distributed to students with no technical issues. During the first two weeks of school, ridership on the two lines serving campus escalated. As of the last week of school there have been over 290,000 boardings from Mt. SAC students.

Staff was aware of the potential for capacity issues and when this became an issue administrative staff quickly had service increased on Line 486. Trips were added throughout the day eastbound and westbound starting during the 7:00 am hour. The Line 486 schedule had buses arriving every 15 minutes, all day, and the enhancements made added capacity to at least two of the trips each hour.

It is hoped that the success of the Mt. SAC and University of La Verne programs will encourage other colleges to participate in the Class Pass. Should this happen, the groundwork is set and a launch at other locations should be smooth and seamless.

Additional Outreach - Staff has done and will continue outreach at current Class Pass campuses as well as community outreach at other events and meetings emphasizing the benefit to residents of our cities.

A continuous presence on campus for the current pilot programs is important because each campus will eventually decide whether to keep the program. Staff recently transported the Foothill Transit mini bus to campus and drove to key campus locations and personally invited students to a light lunch to give feedback about the Class Pass Pilot. Tri-fold brochures, surveys, and Bus Books were distributed and staff answered



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any questions students had. Students were drawn to the bus on campus and in turn came to the lunch and provided valuable feedback on the Class Pass program. Mt. SAC students will be voting on a student fee in Fall 2014 to keep this program and continuously engaging with students will be vital to the adoption of this program.

While the main focus for staff is the adoption of current Class Pass pilot program, there have been discussions about a Class Pass at Citrus College. After dialogue with a few key administrators these discussions have recently ceased. Citrus College administrators felt that students would benefit more from the Metro Gold line that will have a stop adjacent to campus.

Additional documents outlining details of Foothill Transit's student rider programs and contacts with local schools will be provided to the Governing Board at the December 2013 meeting. These documents will outline the details of each program Foothill Transit has participated in as well as a document with details about discussions staff has had with local college administrators.

Fiscal Impact

The total projected budget impact for the Mt. SAC Class Pass pilot program is estimated at \$427,000 and the total projected budget impact for the University of La Verne Class Pass pilot program is estimated at \$97,500. These demonstration programs enhancing service are eligible for funding through Foothill Transit's allocation of Los Angeles County Measure R funds and have been included in Foothill Transit's FY 2014 budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Gagnon'.

Katie Gagnon
Special Projects Manager

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Barnes'.

Doran J. Barnes
Executive Director